

A top-down view of a desk with several open books, pencils, and crumpled pieces of paper scattered around. The background is a light-colored, textured surface. The text is centered in a white circular area.

Between The Pages Teacher's Guide

Five Part Series Grades 3-8

BETWEEN THE PAGES

Quick Start Guide

Program Overview

Program Mission

Between the Pages empowers students to understand stories from a writer's perspective, strengthening both their writing skills and reading comprehension through authentic authorship experiences.

What Makes Between the Pages Unique

- **Expert Video Instruction** - Students learn directly from published author, Alane Adams
- **Complete Story Framework** - Five-lesson progression from idea to resolution
- **Flexible Dual Tracks** - Choose the track that best meets your instructional goals and students' needs
- **Differentiated Materials** - Three levels of student worksheets included
- **Adaptable Implementation** - Works with various schedules and teaching contexts
- **Oral Language Foundation** - Students talk before they write, reducing barriers to entry

Understanding the Two Tracks

Between the Pages is designed with flexibility at its core. The lessons offer **two tracks** to meet different instructional goals and student needs.

Main Track: Video Comprehension & Author's Craft

Focus: Understanding how authors think and make decisions

Who it's for: All students, regardless of whether they'll write complete narratives

What students do:

- Watch Alane's videos and discuss author decision-making
- Complete activity pages focused on video content
- Analyze how story elements work in books they read
- Build reading comprehension through author's perspective

Time commitment: 55 minutes per lesson

Best for:

- Building reading comprehension skills
- Understanding story structure as readers
- Developing critical thinking about texts
- Preparing for future narrative writing

Writing track: Story Planning & Application

Important Note: The Writing track content is marked with gray boxes throughout each lesson. During Guided Practice, students receive additional instruction on strategies they'll use independently if choosing the writing track. You will only use the gray sections if including the writing track.

Focus: Applying author's thinking to original story plans

Who it's for: Students who will benefit from practicing story planning and writing fictional narratives

What students do:

- Everything in Main Track
- Complete Story Planning Pages for their own original stories
- Build complete story plan across all five lessons

Time commitment: 55-70 minutes per lesson (depending on writing time)

Best for:

- Classes writing complete narratives after the series
- Students who need explicit planning instruction and practice
- Building bridges between reading and writing
- Authentic application of story structure knowledge

Important Note: *Even if students never write a complete narrative, the Writing track strengthens reading comprehension by making story structure concrete and personally meaningful.*

Implementation Models

Between the Pages is designed to be flexible. Choose the model that best fits your schedule and goals:

Model A: 5-Week Unit

- Timeline: 1 video per week (55-100 minutes of instructional time)
- Best for: Deepest learning with time for conferencing
- Schedule: Week 1: Video 1 + planning; Week 2: Video 2 + planning; and so on
- Total time: 5 weeks of instruction

Model B: Intensive 2-Week Camp

- Timeline: 1 video every 2-3 days, fast-paced
- Best for: Summer programs, writing camps, intensive workshops
- Schedule: Days 1-2: Video 1; Days 3-4: Video 2; Days 5-6: Video 3; etc.
- Total time: 10-14 days

Model C: Writing Workshop Integration

- Timeline: Flexible, integrated into existing workshop
- Best for: Supplementing ongoing writing instruction
- Schedule: Use videos as mini-lessons, extend over several weeks
- Total time: Variable (8-12 weeks)

Materials Checklist

Before beginning, ensure you have:

- Access to Between the Pages videos (alaneadams.com/btp-home)
- Projection system or interactive whiteboard for video viewing
- Chart paper or whiteboard for modeling
- Writing tools (pencils, pens, markers)
- Main track: Student Activity Pages (differentiated by level)
- Writing track (Optional): Story Planning Pages (differentiated by level)*
- Vocabulary Worksheets (Optional) - Provided here in the teacher guide*
- Optional: Folders or binders for student story planning portfolios*

Learning Progression Overview

Between the Pages follows a carefully sequenced progression that mirrors how professional authors plan stories.

Lesson	Focus	What Students Learn	Main track Outcome	Writing track Outcome
1: Meet Alane Video Length 5:14	Story Ideas & Brainstorming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How authors generate story ideas through real-life inspiration • Multiple brainstorming strategies authors use • Where ideas come from and how to recognize them 	Understand how authors find inspiration	Generate and select one story idea to develop
2: Before Page One Video Length 4:51	Genre, Title, and Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How authors choose genre based on interests • Why titles matter and how they change • How setting and world-building create story worlds • How these three elements work together 	Identify these elements in books they read	Choose genre, create title, establish setting
3: Heroes, Villains, Sidekicks & Minions Video Length 6:26	Character Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between protagonists and antagonists • What makes characters complex and interesting • Why “the worse the villain, the better the story” • How character roles drive stories forward 	Identify and analyze characters in texts	Create protagonist or antagonist with traits

Lesson	Focus	What Students Learn	Main track Outcome	Writing track Outcome
4: The Super-Secret Ingredient Video Length 5:48	Problems and Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why problems are the “secret ingredient” of stories • Character + Problem + Solution = Story formula • How problems create stakes and drive action • Why stories need conflict to be interesting 	Recognize problems and consequences in stories	Develop problem with consequences for their story
5: Completing the Puzzle Video Length 5:07	Solutions and the Power of Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why stories need satisfying endings • How reading builds empathy (the “superpower”) • Why heroes win and what that teaches readers • How all story elements connect 	Understand why reading matters	Plan solution; complete full story plan

Target Grade Levels & Differentiation

Between the Pages is optimally designed for students in **grades 3-5**, when students:

- Have developed sufficient metacognitive awareness to think about their own thinking
- Are ready for explicit instruction in narrative structure
- Can sustain attention for planning multi-step projects
- Benefit from systematic, scaffolded writing instruction

Between the Pages can be easily modified for other grades with these suggested modifications:

- **Grade 2:** Add heavy scaffolding, oral emphasis, drawing options
- **Grades 6-8:** Increase complexity (subplots, internal conflict, character arcs)

Differentiation at a Glance

Built Into the Program:

- **3 Levels of Student Worksheets:**
 - Level 1: Foundational (heavy scaffolding)
 - Level 2: Mid-Level (moderate support)
 - Level 3: Advanced (open-ended)
- **Oral Language Protocols:** All students discuss ideas before writing
- **Visual Learning:** Video instruction engages multiple learning styles
- **Student Choice:** Students control their own story content

Quick Supports:

- **Multilingual Learners:** Sentence frames, visual supports, partner work, pre-teach vocabulary
- **Struggling Writers:** Use Level 1 worksheets, allow drawing/dictation, extra modeling
- **Advanced Writers:** Use Level 3 worksheets, add subplots, early drafting

What's in Each Lesson? The Gradual Release Model

Every Between the Pages lesson follows the same instructional structure based on the *Gradual Release of Responsibility model*. This consistent framework helps students know what to expect and allows teachers to focus on content rather than procedures.

The progression: I Do → We Do → You Do

I Do: Model (12 minutes)

What it looks like:

- Students watch video with teacher, pausing at strategic points
- Teacher provides think-alouds, making thinking visible
- Teacher demonstrates how to process and apply video content
- Students observe, listen, and participate in discussions

We Do: Guided Practice (15 minutes)

Structure varies by track:

Main track - All Students (Full 15 minutes):

- Discuss video content and key concepts

- Review story elements learned
- Make predictions about upcoming content
- Connect to books students are reading

Writing track - All Students (8 minutes) + Writing track Only (7 minutes):

- **Part 1 (All Students):** Same as Main track discussion
- **Part 2 (Writing track Only):** Co-create story elements for class story
 - Teacher and students collaborate on example
 - Teacher provides scaffolding and models decision-making
 - Class makes collaborative choices
 - Creates anchor chart for reference

You Do: Independent Practice (15 minutes)

Structure varies by track:

Main track - All Students:

- Complete Activity Pages focused on video comprehension
- Analyze story elements from Alane's teaching
- Make predictions and connections
- Reflect on what authors do

Writing track - Students Also Complete:

- Story Planning Pages for their own stories
- Apply what they learned to original ideas
- Make author decisions for their narratives
- Build complete story plan across five lessons
- Can reference class example and anchor charts

Teacher Role:

- Circulates to confer with students
- Provides targeted support and feedback
- Monitors progress and understanding
- Celebrates student thinking

What Each Lesson Includes

- **Complete lesson plan** with suggested timing, objectives, and step-by-step instructions

- **Differentiated student practice pages** at three levels (Foundational, Grade-Level, Advanced)
- **Reading-Writing Connections** showing how writing knowledge transfers to reading
- **Quick Checks** for formative assessment throughout the lesson
- **Vocabulary instruction** with explicit teaching of key terms
- **Oral rehearsal** which is foundational to writing success because it reduces cognitive load, clarifies thinking, and builds confidence

The consistent structure across all 5 lessons helps both teachers and students develop routines that maximize learning time.

Vocabulary Toolkit

Vocabulary knowledge is a critical predictor of both reading comprehension and writing quality. *Between the Pages* includes systematic vocabulary instruction in every lesson using research-based protocols that ensure deep learning.

Rationale and Science of Reading Connection

Research demonstrates that students need 6-12 meaningful exposures to a word before they can use it independently (Beck et al., 2013). Traditional methods—such as copying definitions from a dictionary or writing words multiple times—are ineffective because they lack the active processing and meaningful context necessary for deep learning.

Key Principles from the Science of Reading:

- **Multiple modalities** strengthen memory tracks (visual + auditory + kinesthetic)
- **Active processing** (generating examples, making connections) creates deeper understanding than passive reception
- **Student-friendly definitions** in accessible language support comprehension
- **Immediate application** to authentic tasks transfers learning to long-term memory
- **Collaborative discussion** provides peer modeling and additional practice

Between the Pages uses vocabulary activities that efficiently incorporate all five principles.

You have two options for vocabulary instruction:

- **Option A:** Students complete the vocabulary worksheet alongside you as you teach
- **Option B:** Conduct the activity orally while you model on chart paper or the board

You're Ready to Begin!

You now have a comprehensive understanding of *Between the Pages*—its philosophy, structure, goals, and instructional approach. You're ready to guide your students through the exciting journey of story planning.

Next Steps:

- Review the complete lesson plans
- Select your implementation model (5-week unit, 2-week camp, or workshop integration) and decide on best track for goals and student need
- Gather materials (videos, student worksheets, chart paper)
- Preview Lesson 1 and prepare to launch!

Your students are about to discover their power as storytellers. Let's begin!

Part One: Meet Alane

Grade: 3-5 | Duration: 55 minutes | Video Length: 5:14

Standards Alignment

CCSS: W.3.3, W.4.3, W.5.3, W.3.5, W.4.5, W.5.5, SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1

Lesson at a Glance

- Connect & Prepare (8 min): Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary
- Model (12 min): Watch video with strategic think-aloud pauses
- Guided Practice (15 min):
 - Discuss what authors think about and how Alane became an author
 - *Writing Track: Brainstorm ideas for writing a narrative*
- Independent Practice (15 min):
 - Teacher Choice: “What do Authors Think About”, “My Dream”, “Meet Alane” Student Activity Pages
 - *Writing Track: “Brainstorm Ideas” Story Planning Page*
- Lesson Wrap-Up (5 min): Partner share, exit ticket, and reading connection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand where authors get story ideas from
2. Explain what authors think about before writing
3. Connect Alane’s journey to their own dreams and interests

Writing Track Objective (Optional):

4. Use multiple strategies to brainstorm their own story ideas

Materials Needed

- Part 1 video: “Meet Alane” (5:14 runtime)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or digital projector
- “Morphology Minute” Worksheet and “Vocabulary Word Map” Worksheet
- Student Activity Pages: “What do Authors Think About”, “My Dream”, “Meet Alane”, “Author’s Inspiration”, “Interview an Author” (L1, L2, or L3)
- Writing Track (Optional): “Brainstorm Ideas” Story Planning Page (L1, L2, L3)
- Pencils/markers and sticky notes or scratch paper for exit ticket

Key Vocabulary

- **Author:** A person who writes books or stories
- **Planning:** Thinking and deciding about your story before you start writing it
- **Brainstorm:** Coming up with many different ideas quickly without judging them

Connect & Prepare

Activate Prior Knowledge & Build Curiosity

Say: Authors, today begins an exciting journey! Over the next five lessons, you're going to learn directly from a real author, Alane Adams. Have you ever wondered where authors get their ideas? Or how do they create characters that feel so real? What makes a story impossible to put down? You're about to find out! Alane is going to show you exactly how she thinks and plans before writing a single word. Here's the coolest part—once you understand how authors think, you'll never read a book the same way again.

Turn and Talk: Have students think about their favorite book or story. Ask them if they have ever wondered: How did the author come up with that idea? Where do stories even come from?

Allow 30 seconds for discussion, then call on 1–2 pairs to share out.

Say: Today, Alane is going to show us where her story ideas came from. By the end of today, you'll understand how authors find inspiration and ideas for their stories.

Vocabulary Instruction: Morphology Minute

Teacher Note: You may choose to have students complete a worksheet alongside you or to just complete the vocabulary activities orally.

Word: **brainstorm**

Break It:

- Write with spaces: BRAIN + STORM
- Use different colors for each part
- Explain meanings: *brain* (organ that thinks/creates ideas), *storm* (powerful, fast, with energy)
- Students repeat each part aloud

- Say: "When we combine these—BRAIN + STORM—brainstorm: to come up with many ideas quickly."

Build It:

- Display WORD FAMILY: brainstorm, brainstorming, brainstormed, brainstormer
- Students identify the shared root
- Explain: Same root with different affixes (*-ing*, *-ed*, *-er*)
- Circle *brainstorm* in all words

Use It:

- Students write a sentence, share with partner
- Call on two students to share aloud

Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary Word Map

Say: There are two more words we need to know today.

Vocabulary Words: **author, planning**

- Word (center circle): Write the vocabulary word. Have students repeat it twice.
- Definition (box): Write a student-friendly definition. Keep it simple and clear.
- Examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 examples, students add 1-2 of their own examples. *Note: Examples show what the word IS or DOES*
- Non-examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 non-examples, students add 1-2 of their own non-examples. *Note: Non-examples show what the word IS NOT*
- Sentence (box): Teacher models one sentence using the word correctly. Then students write their own sentence. Call on 1-2 students to share sentences aloud.

Model

Set Viewing Purpose

Say: Now we're going to meet author Alane Adams and watch her tell us how she became a writer and where her story ideas came from.

Display the following guiding questions on the board:

- *How did Alane become an author?*

- *Where did her story idea come from?*

Say: These questions will guide your thinking as we watch. Let's begin!

Watch Video with Strategic Think-Aloud Pauses

Play Video: Part One - Meet Alane

Pause Point 1 — Stop at 1:50 (after “Have you ever had a dream?”)

Model Thinking: Alane explained that a dream can be a life goal. I had a dream of becoming a teacher. I'm wondering how Alane's dream came true. Understanding an author's journey helps us appreciate their books.

Resume video

Pause Point 2 — Stop at 5:05 (after “See if you can come up with a list.”)

Say: Let's stop here. The very first thing authors need is the story idea itself. That's where every story begins. Did you hear where Alane's idea came from? Her son wanted a book to read! Without an idea, there's no story.

Turn and Talk: Have students get together with a partner and discuss. Where else do you think story ideas come from? Have you ever had an idea for a story?

[Students share for 1 minute]

Say: As readers, understanding where authors get ideas helps us appreciate what we read.

Resume video to end.

Guided Practice

Review what students just learned in the video and discuss any necessary parts.

Refer to the “Meet Alane” activity page to review anything that students will complete in independent practice if you choose to have students complete this page.

Say: Let's think back to Alane's journey. She shared something very personal with us—her dream. Let's talk about dreams and how they connect to becoming an author.

Ask: What was Alane's dream?

(Expected: “To become an author” or “To write books”)

Say: Yes! And what did Alane do before she became an author? What were some of the interesting things from her life?

Call on 2–3 students to share. Responses could include: Climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, was a professor teaching at the university, always had a dream to write books)

Say: Even though Alane did other amazing things, she never gave up on her dream to be an author. Then one day, her son asked her to write him a book, and that conversation changed everything.

Turn and Talk: Tell students to think about their own dream—something they hope to do or become someday. Have students share their dream with a partner..

Call on 3–4 students to share their dreams with the whole class. Affirm each dream positively.

Say: Just like Alane had a dream that came true, each of you have dreams too. Sometimes our dreams change, and sometimes—like Alane—we hold onto them.

Note to Teacher: *The following section is for the Writing Track and for students who will be completing Story Planning Pages. If you are not using the Writing Track, skip to Independent Practice.*

Writing Track (Optional)

Say: Now we’re going to learn three strategies that authors could use when they need to come up with story ideas. We practiced our vocabulary word ‘brainstorm’ earlier. Watch how I use brainstorming to generate story ideas, and then you’ll help me practice these strategies.

Ask: Who can remind us what it means to brainstorm?

(Expected: “Coming up with lots of ideas quickly without judging them.”)

Validate responses.

Strategy 1: “What If” Questions

Say: “What if” questions can help us imagine new possibilities. When we ask ‘What if...’ and answer it, we already have the start of a story.

Model Thinking: I’m going to try this strategy. Listen as I share my thoughts. ‘What if a kid could talk to animals?’ My brain’s already thinking—what would happen? Would the animals need help? Would the kid keep it secret? I’m going to write down this idea: ‘A kid who can talk to animals but didn’t tell anyone and kept it a secret.’

Write or display on board:

- What if you could fly?
- What if you discovered a creature no one else had ever seen?
- What if you woke up in a different place?

Say: Now you try! Pick one of these ‘What if’ questions and finish it with a story idea.

Invite student call-outs to generate 3–5 story ideas. Record them on the board.

(Examples: “A kid who can fly and finds a hidden city in the clouds.” “A kid finds a tiny dragon in their backyard.”)

Strategy 2: Draw a Picture

Say: Sometimes drawing sparks new ideas. Watch as I share my thoughts.

Model Thinking: I’m drawing a simple princess—stick figure with a crown. Now what could happen to her? Does she get lost? Is she a secret spy? I like ‘gets lost’. My idea is: A princess who gets lost and has to find her way home.

Invite 2–3 students to come up and draw quick, simple pictures on the board. For each, ask the class: “What story could happen here?”

Record 3–5 class-generated ideas based on the drawings.

Strategy 3: Sentence Starters

Say: Another way we can brainstorm ideas is by finishing sentences. Once you have the beginning of a sentence, your imagination finishes it.

Model Thinking: Let me try this. The sentence starts with: ‘A kid discovers...’ Now I’m thinking, ‘What? My brain’s searching—attic? Basement? Forest?’ Attic feels right. ‘What’s in an attic?’ I’m imagining a treasure map! So my idea is: ‘A kid discovers a treasure map in their attic.’

Say: Now you’ll help me finish some sentence starters to brainstorm some more story ideas.

Write or display on board:

- One day I found...
- My friend and I decided to...
- Something strange happened when...

Invite students to finish each sentence. Record 3–5 new story ideas.

Point to the class list of ideas.

Say: Look at all the ideas we generated using these three strategies! Authors use techniques like this when they're brainstorming story ideas.

Independent Practice

Say: Now it's your turn to think more about what we learned from Alane today.

Teacher Note: You may choose which activity pages to have students complete based on instructional goals, student needs, and time. Distribute differentiated activity pages accordingly.

Activity Page Options: "What do Authors Think About", "My Dream", "Meet Alane", "Author's Inspiration", "Interview an Author" (choose L1, L2, or L3 for your class).

Walk through each activity page with students and have them work with a partner or independently to complete.

Teacher Circulation & Support

While students work on Activity Pages:

- Check for understanding
- Support students in making connections between the lesson and their own thinking
- Guide students in completing their chosen activity

If you have chosen to complete the Writing Track for your class, distribute the "Brainstorm Ideas" Planning Page (choose L1, L2, or L3). Students can complete the planning page after they complete their activity pages or you can provide additional time on another day for the writing activities.

Say: Now you'll use what we practiced together to brainstorm your own story ideas. Choose one of the three strategies we used—What If questions, drawing a picture, or sentence starters—and use it to create multiple story ideas. Remember, we're just brainstorming today, so come up with lots of ideas!

Teacher Circulation & Support

- **Stuck:** "What's your favorite book? Could you write something similar? Or try one of our strategies—What If, drawing, or sentence starters."
- **Only 1-2 ideas:** "Try a different strategy—switch to 'What If' or drawing."
- **Writing full stories:** "Just ideas for now—save the details for later!"

✓ **Quick Check (after 8 minutes):**

- *For Activity Pages:* Circulate to ensure students are engaging with the questions
- *For Story Planning Pages:* Ask students how many story ideas they have so far. Have them show you using their fingers.
 - Most students have 2-3+ ideas → On track
 - Many have 0-1 ideas → Provide quick whole-class prompting and demonstrate more examples on the board


Lesson Wrap-Up

Say: You just experienced how authors think at the beginning of creating a book. Authors can get inspiration in all sorts of ways.

Turn and Talk: Share one thing you learned today about how authors work or where they get their ideas.

[Students share for 1 minute]

Call on 2-3 students to share with the whole class.

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** This week during independent reading have students become idea detectives. Have them try to figure out where the author might have gotten their story idea and inspiration. They can look for clues in the author's notes, dedications, or in the story itself. Ask students to think about what experiences or questions might have inspired the authors.

Create an anchor chart titled *Where Authors Find Inspiration*. Add examples from the student's independent reading throughout the week.

Exit Ticket

Distribute index cards, post-it notes, or scratch paper.

Write on the board or display:

- "One place authors get story ideas is _____."
- "The most interesting thing I learned today about how authors work is _____ because _____."

Students complete and submit exit tickets as they transition to the next activity.

Tell students that at the end of the video author Alane Adams told them to think about some things that an author has to think about before writing a single page. Tell them that over the next couple of videos, you will explore these ideas further.

END OF LESSON 1

Part Two: Before Page One

Grade: 3–5 | Duration: 55 minutes | Video Length: 4:51

Standards Alignment

CCSS: W.3.3, W.4.3, W.5.3, W.3.5, W.4.5, W.5.5, SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1

Lesson at a Glance

- Connect & Prepare (8 min): Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary
- Model (12 min): Watch video with strategic think-aloud pauses
- Guided Practice (15 min):
 - Discuss video story elements: title, genre, and setting
 - *Writing Track: Co-create class story focusing on title, genre, and setting*
- Independent Practice (15 min):
 - “Before Page One” Student Activity Page
 - *Writing Track: “Genre, Setting, Title” Story Planning Page*
- Lesson Wrap-Up (5 min): Partner share, exit ticket, and reading connection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the three big decisions authors make: title, genre, and setting
2. Explain how these elements work together to shape a story
3. Predict what other elements authors need to plan

Writing Track Objective (Optional):

4. Determine the title, genre, and setting for their own story idea

Materials Needed

- Part 2 video: *Before Page One* (runtime: 4:51)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or digital display
- “Vocabulary Word Map” Worksheet
- Student Activity Pages: “Before Page One”, “Five Senses Setting”, “Genre, Title, Setting”, “What kind of book?”, “World Building Basics” (L1, L2, or L3)
- Writing Track (Optional): “Genre, Setting, Title” Story Planning Page (L1, L2, L3)
- Pencils/pens and sticky notes or scratch paper for exit ticket
- Created anchor charts from Part 1

Key Vocabulary

- **Genre:** The category or type of story (fantasy, mystery, science fiction, etc.)
- **Setting:** Where and when a story takes place
- **World-building:** Creating the rules, creatures, and culture of a fantasy world
- **Title:** The name of a story or book

Connect & Prepare

Activate Prior Knowledge & Build Curiosity

Turn and Talk: Ask students to share with a partner how they determine if they want to read a book or not when they pick it up.

Allow 30 seconds for discussion, then call on 1–2 pairs to share out.

Say: Today we're going to touch on some of those ideas a bit more. You're going to see some of the decisions Alane made for her book *The Red Sun*—and you'll understand how authors make those same kinds of decisions.

Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary Word Map

Say: Alane is going to use four specific words in today's video. Let's learn them now so we can follow along with what she's teaching us.

Vocabulary Words: **genre, setting, world-building, title**

- Word (center circle): Write the vocabulary word. Have students repeat it twice.
- Definition (box): Write a student-friendly definition. Keep it simple and clear.
- Examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 examples, students add 1-2 of their own examples. *Note: Examples show what the word IS or DOES*
- Non-examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 non-examples, students add 1-2 of their own non-examples. *Note: Non-examples show what the word IS NOT*
- Sentence (box): Teacher models one sentence using the word correctly. Then students write their own sentences. Call on 1-2 students to share sentences aloud.

Model

Set Viewing Purpose

Write on board or display digitally:

- *What are the three decisions Alane talks about?*
- *How do these decisions help shape her story?*

Say: Watch Alane explain the choices she made before writing *The Red Sun*. Think about books you've read—can you see authors making these same decisions?

Watch Video with Strategic Pauses

Play video: "Before Page One" (runtime: 4:51)

Pause Point 1 — Stop at 1:17 (after "All right, title sorted, what's next?")

Say: Alane explained that titles are important and sometimes change. A strong title gives readers a hint and makes them curious.

Ask: What's a great book title you know? Why does it work?

[Take 2-3 quick responses]

Resume video

Pause Point 2 — Watch through the end, including the animated world-building clip.

Model Thinking: I'm thinking about why Alane chose fantasy. She said she and her son loved mythology—so they picked a genre they already cared about. That makes sense. When I write about something I'm interested in, it's easier and more fun. I'm also noticing how important the setting is—without it, readers can't picture where the story happens. Genre and setting work together to build the world.

Turn and Talk: Have students discuss what *world-building* means with a partner and why it's important when writing a fictional story.

Call on 1-2 students to share with the class.

Say: Alane taught us about *title*, *genre*, and *setting* today. Let's see how she used these in *The Red Sun*.

Display and read the following excerpt with students:

Sam took a proper look around. So this was Orkney. The place didn't seem half bad. The day was warm. He filled his lungs with air from this new world. It was kind of crazy, but he was excited. The air had a faint pungent odor like the burnt sage from his mom's cooking. A large stone stood nearby, charred and cracked from their passage. Sam couldn't remember much of the journey; he had been too busy trying not to get eaten by the Shun Kara. He did remember a sense of falling and a lack of oxygen.

By the looks of it, they were on top of a large boulder like the one back in Pilot Rock. In fact, the closer Sam looked, the more he realized it was the same boulder. Only now, the big boulder sat in the middle of a lush green valley. Mountains rose up in the distance. The sun was a reddish-orange ball hanging low in the sky. Everything looked peaceful.

Ask:

- What genre is this story? How do you know?
- How does Alane describe the setting?
- Does the title *The Red Sun* make sense now?

Teaching Point:

- **Setting:** Orkney - a magical realm with mountains, valleys, different sun
- **Genre:** Fantasy - magical travel, different world, creatures (Shun Kara)
- **Title Connection:** "The Red Sun" - notice the red-orange sun in the description

Say: The *genre*, *setting*, and *title* work together to create the stories we read.

📖 Reading-Writing Connection: As readers, we use the *title* and *genre* to help us choose books. We might think, *I want to read a fantasy book*, and look for certain titles. As writers, we make those same choices to help readers find and enjoy our stories. Reading like a writer—and writing for readers—strengthens both comprehension and composition.

Challenge students to examine 2-3 book titles from the class library this week and record observations in their "Read Like a Writer" journal. For each title, they should note: the genre clues found in the title, what they expect the book to be about based on the title alone, and why the author might have chosen that particular title.

Guided Practice

Review the three elements Alane taught in this episode: title, genre, setting. Spend as much time as needed on each element.

Say: These are the decisions Alane taught us today. On your activity page today, you will also predict what else is important to think about. Predicting is something good readers do because it helps them think more deeply about the story they are reading.

Note to Teacher: The following section is for Writing Track for students who will be completing Story Planning Pages. If you are not using the Writing Track, skip to Independent Practice.

Writing Track (Optional)

Co-Create a Class Story

Say: To plan our own class story together, we are going to use the *Genre, Setting, Title* Planning Page as our guide. Watch how I work through each section, because you'll do the same during independent practice.

Display the *Genre, Setting, Title* Planning Page digitally or create a version on chart paper.

Choose a Genre

Say: The first decision we need to make is choosing a genre. Remember in the video, Alane chose fantasy because she and her son loved mythology. For our writing assignment, we are going to choose fiction too.

Point to the *Genre* section on the Student Planning Page.

Explain the genre choices: *fantasy, mystery, science fiction, adventure, realistic fiction, or other*.

Ask: What is your favorite fictional genre to read? What kind of story would be fun for us to write together?

Give students 20 seconds of silent think time.

Conduct a quick hand-raise poll for 2-3 genre options. Record tallies and count votes.

Say: It looks like [fantasy/mystery/etc.] has the most votes. Let’s go with that! But we can’t stop at just naming the genre—we need to explain why we chose it. Watch how I do this.

Model Thinking: I’ll write: We chose fantasy because our class enjoys books with magic like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. Fantasy lets us be creative with creatures and magical elements. See how I connected our choice to what we enjoy reading?

Plan the Setting

Say: Now that we’ve chosen our genre, we need to decide where and when our story takes place. This is called the setting, and it needs to match our genre.

Model Thinking: I’m brainstorming settings that make sense for our story’s genre. I’m thinking about where stories like this usually happen and what details make them memorable.

Generate ideas with student input.

Examples to support student brainstorming:

- *Fantasy: a magical forest, an enchanted castle, an underground kingdom, a floating island*
- *Mystery: an old mansion, a boarding school with hidden passages, a small town with secrets, a museum after hours*
- *Realistic Fiction: a middle school, a summer camp, a neighborhood, a family home during a move*

Allow students to vote on their favorite setting for the class story.

Record the class choice on the *Genre, Setting, Title* Planning Page or chart paper.

Model Thinking: I want to make our setting specific so readers can picture it. Instead of just “a forest,” I’ll write *a glowing forest with talking trees and floating lights*. Then I’ll decide when the story takes place—present day, the past, the future, or a made-up time. By adding a few details, I can make the world feel real and connected to our genre.

Say: That’s what authors do when they build a story world—they think about what readers will see, hear, and imagine.

Choose a Title

Say: Now that we've chosen our genre and setting, we'll brainstorm possible titles. A strong title makes readers curious and gives them a clue about the story. Remember, authors often change their titles later, so this is just a starting point.

Point to the *Title* section on the Student Planning Page.

Ask: What would be a catchy or interesting title that fits our story's genre and setting?

Brainstorm 3–4 title ideas with the class.

Conduct a quick vote and circle the title winner.

Model Thinking: I'm thinking about what makes our chosen title work. I'll write: *We chose the title [title] because it connects to our [genre/setting/both]. It hints at what's to come without giving away the ending. A good title makes readers curious and invites them into the story world.*

Show How the Elements Work Together

Say: This is the most important part. We need to show how they work together, not just list three separate parts.

Model Thinking: I'll write: *Our story is a [genre] called [title]. It takes place [setting]. These choices fit together because the [setting] is the perfect place for a [genre] story. The title reflects our world and theme, and together they create a [mysterious, magical, exciting, etc.] story experience.* I'm showing how the three elements connect instead of listing them separately—that's what makes writing feel intentional.

Say: Authors always make sure their story choices support one another, just like Alane did in *The Red Sun*. Notice how we worked through each decision step-by-step—that's exactly what you would do when planning your own story.

Point to the anchor chart showing genre, setting, and title.

Say: We've now learned about three important elements authors need: genre, setting, and title. But remember at the end of the video? Alane said there's still one more important thing authors need to think about. What do you think it might be?

Independent Practice

Student Activity Pages (All Students)

Distribute the "Before Page One" Student Activity Page (choose L1, L2, or L3 based on student needs).

Provide instructions for students to complete the worksheets. Note: L2 and L3 worksheets will also have students predict what else authors need.

Teacher Note: You may choose to use the additional worksheets provided based on learning goals. Student Activity Pages: *"Before Page One"*, *"Five Senses Setting"*, *"Genre, Title, Setting"*, *"What kind of book?"*, *"World Building Basics"* (L1, L2, or L3)

Teacher Circulation & Support (for Activity Pages):

While students work:

- Check that students can define the three elements from today's lesson
- Encourage thoughtful predictions (there's no wrong answer!)
- Ask guiding questions: "Think about stories you love—what makes them exciting?" "What do stories need besides a setting and title?"

Story Planning Pages (Optional - For Writing Track Only)

If you plan to have students write complete narratives, distribute the "Genre, Setting, Title" Planning Page (choose from L1, L2, or L3).

Say: Now it's your turn to be the author and make the same decisions Alane made. You'll plan your genre, setting, and title using your Planning Page. Use the class example we created together as your guide.

Remind students:

- Choose a genre that matches the story you want to tell
- Create a setting that fits your genre
- Design a title that gives readers a clue about your story
- Make sure all three elements work together

Teacher Circulation & Support (for Planning Pages):

While students work:

- Circulate around the room
- Offer feedback and encouragement
- Ask guiding questions to help deepen student thinking

Ask (as you confer):

- "What made you choose this genre?"
- "Does your setting fit your genre?"
- "What do you want your title to tell readers?"
- "How do these three elements work together?"

If students finish early, have them reread their plan and make sure the three parts work together.

Lesson Wrap-Up

Share & Reflect

Turn and Talk: Have students share one thing they learned about what authors decide before writing.

[Call on 2 volunteers to share with class]

Say: Great thinking! These three decisions—title, genre, setting—are important parts of planning a story.

Tell students that at the end of the video Alane ended with this “Now that we've tackled these three important pieces—title, genre, and setting—we're ready to come up with one of the most important elements of the story. What do you think it is?”

Tell students to think about what they think it may be and save their ideas so they can discuss next time.


Exit Ticket

Distribute sticky notes or scratch paper.

Display on board:

- *Today I learned that authors need to think about _____, _____, and _____ before they write. The next thing I think authors need is _____ because _____.*

Have students fill in this sentence frame and turn in at a designated spot before moving to the next activity.

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** This week during independent reading, have students notice how authors use title, genre, and setting together. Prompt them to ask: Does the title fit the genre and setting? How does the author describe the setting to make it real? Would a different genre change the whole story? Students can record observations in their “Read Like a Writer” Journal.

End Of Lesson 2

Part Three: Heroes, Villains, Sidekicks, and Minions

Grade: 3-5 | Duration: 55 minutes | Video Length: 6:26

Standards Alignment

CCSS: W.3.3, W.4.3, W.5.3, W.3.3.a, W.4.3.a, W.5.3.a, RL.3.3, RL.4.3, RL.5.3, SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1, L.3.4.b, L.4.4.b, L.5.4.b

Lesson at a Glance

- Connect & Prepare (8 min): Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary
- Model (12 min): Watch video with strategic think-aloud pauses
- Guided Practice (15 min):
 - Discuss characters and their impact on a story
 - *Writing track: Co-create a character for a class story*
- Independent Practice (15 min):
 - “Character Showcase” Student Activity Page
 - *Writing track: “My Character” Story Planning Page*
- Lesson Wrap-Up (5 min): Partner share, exit ticket, and reading connection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the protagonist and antagonist in a story and explain their roles
2. Explain what makes characters interesting and complex

Writing track Objective (Optional):

3. Create an original character with unique traits for their own story

Materials Needed

- Part 3 video: "Heroes, Villains, Sidekicks, and Minions" (6:26 runtime)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or digital display
- “Morphology Minute” Worksheet
- Student Activity Pages: “Character Showcase”, “Character Map”, “Character Traits”, “Complex Character Building”, “Know Your Audience” (L1, L2, or L3)
- Writing track (Optional): “ My Character” Story Planning Page (L1, L2, L3)
- Short book that shows a great hero and villain
- Sticky notes or scratch paper for exit ticket

- Pencils/markers
- Anchor charts from previous lessons

Key Vocabulary

- **Protagonist:** The main character in a story; the hero we root for (from Greek: *protos* "first" + *agon* "contest")
- **Antagonist:** The character who works against the protagonist; often the villain (from Greek: *ant* "against" + *agon* "contest")

Connect & Prepare

Activate Prior Knowledge & Build Curiosity

Say: Over the past two videos with author Alane Adams, we explored titles, settings, and genres and how they work together to create a story. Today, we'll continue learning with Alane about another important story element—one she says makes readers really care about a story. Before we watch the video, let's learn two key terms that will appear in today's lesson.

Morphology Minute: Vocabulary Instruction

Write or display **protagonist** and **antagonist** on the board.

Break It:

- Write on board with spaces: PRO – TAGON – IST | ANT – AGON – IST
- Use different colors for each part
- Explain meanings: *pro-* (for/first), *ant-* (against), *agon* (struggle), *-ist* (person)
- Say: "Protagonist = main person in the struggle—the hero we root for. Antagonist = person against the protagonist—often the villain."
- Students repeat each part aloud

Build It:

- Display WORD FAMILY: protagonist, antagonist, pro athlete, progress, antibacterial, antifreeze
- Ask: "What roots or prefixes appear in multiple words?"
- Explain: *pro-* = for/forward; *ant-/anti-* = against. Circle shared roots.

Use It:

- Display: "The _____ in my favorite book is _____."
- Students complete silently, share with partner, then 1-2 share aloud

✓ Quick Check: Students stand if they can name a protagonist or antagonist from their reading. Share with a partner.

- Most confident → proceed
- Many unsure → review first

Model

Before Viewing: Set Purpose

Model Thinking: Before we watch our next video with Alane, I'm thinking about what makes my favorite characters interesting. I like Harry Potter because he's brave but also scared sometimes—his flaws make him real. Today we'll see how Alane creates her characters in the book *The Red Sun*.

Display focus questions on board:

- *What makes Sam Baron an interesting character?*
- *Why does the villain need to be really bad?*

During Viewing: Watch with Strategic Pauses

Start Video

Pause Point 1: Stop at 1:47 (After Sam Baron's complexity is explained)

Model Thinking: Let's pause to process what we've learned about Sam. Alane said he's part god and part witch—light and dark magic inside one person. That means he has both good and bad potential, and we don't know which side will win. That uncertainty makes him complex and interesting. Giving a character both strengths and flaws makes readers care more.

Resume Video

Pause Point 2 – 3:52 (After “the worse the villain, the better the story”)

Model Thinking: Alane kept making her villain worse—even attacking Sam as a baby. Why? Because the more dangerous the villain, the more we want the hero to win. When the villain is truly dangerous and the stakes are high, we have to keep reading. Now I understand why authors make this choice!

Facilitate a brief discussion about *why authors might choose to make villains especially evil or powerful?* Encourage examples from familiar classroom texts.

Resume Video to End (3:52–6:26)

After Viewing: Discuss Key Concepts

Display and read excerpt aloud:

“Your father is a descendant of Odin, and your mother—”


“Rego, don’t!” Abigail interrupted.

“He needs to know,” Rego insisted, his eyes fixed on Sam. “Your mother is a witch. Your parents crossed through the stonefire when you were a tiny thing to protect you from the rest of them witches, like Endera Tarkana. The witches killed your father, and now they’re after you.”

Teaching Point: This reveals Sam’s complexity: he’s part god (from his father’s side) and part witch (from his mother’s side). This makes him interesting because he has both light and dark inside him, just like Alane explained in the video.

Ask: Can you see Sam’s complexity in this scene? What details show it?

Say: Understanding how authors create their characters helps us appreciate why we care so much about what happens to them.

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** Understanding character roles helps students as both readers and writers. Readers track who drives the story and creates conflict. Writers use this knowledge to build compelling relationships between heroes and villains. This week, have students identify the protagonist and antagonist in their independent books and notice how authors develop them over time. Have them record their observations in their *Read Like a Writer* Journal.

Guided Practice

Say: Alane taught us about two important character types today: protagonists and antagonists. Let's think a little deeper about what these mean.

Create an anchor chart with student input. Think aloud as you record ideas:

Protagonist	Antagonist
Main character or hero	Opposes the protagonist
We root for them	Creates conflict
Complex (good and flawed)	Really bad or dangerous
Faces challenges and problems	Powerful
Readers connect with them	Makes story exciting

Say: I'm showing these traits side by side so we can see the contrast. The protagonist and antagonist are opposites, but both need to be strong. A weak hero or a weak villain makes the story less exciting. Both need to challenge each other.

Note to Teacher: This section is for the Writing track and for students who will be completing the Planning Pages. If you are not using the Writing track, skip to Independent Practice.

Writing track (Optional)

Say: We've seen how Alane created Sam Baron. Now we'll think like an author and create a character together for our class story."

Review class story details from previous lessons by pointing to the anchor chart showing the title, genre, and setting.

Say: Today we will create our first character. Let's start with our antagonist—the villain—because that's where conflict begins.

Display "My Character" Planning Page

Model Thinking: Our first decision—what kind of being is our villain? Human, animal, magical, or something else? I’m connecting this to our genre and setting. Since our story is a *[genre]* that takes place in *[setting]*, we want a character that fits that world.

Invite student suggestions.

Model Thinking: Someone suggested a shadow creature—that’s intriguing! I’m picturing it now: a villain made of darkness would be hard to defeat because how do you fight a shadow? That fits our fantasy genre perfectly. I’ll jot that down in the organizer.

Continue co-constructing the character using the *Character Brainstorming* Planning Page. Alternate between modeling, student input, and short partner talks.

Say: We decided our villain is a magical shadow creature. Now we need a name that sounds dark and threatening. You suggested *Nightshade*. I like that—nightshade is a poisonous plant, so it fits perfectly for a villain! The name sounds dangerous and mysterious. I’ll add that to our Planning Page.

Turn and Talk: Have partners discuss: *What could Nightshade look like? What would make a shadow creature scary?*

[Students share for 1 minute total]

Invite several students to share with the class. Record ideas on “My Character” Planning Page.

Continue co-constructing until the Planning Page is complete.

✓ **Quick Check:** Have students show thumbs up if they’re ready to begin creating their own characters, and thumbs down if they need more help before starting.

[Scan responses and note who may need additional support.]

Independent Practice

Say: Alane taught us about protagonists and antagonists today—the heroes we root for and the villains who create conflict.

Distribute the “Character Showcase” Student Activity Page (choose L1, L2, or L3 based on student needs).

Have students choose a book they know well or read a book aloud that shows a great hero and villain.

Teacher Note: You may choose to have students complete the additional worksheets provided. Student Activity Pages: “*Character Showcase*”, “*Character Map*”, “*Character Traits*”, “*Complex Character Building*”, “*Know Your Audience*” (L1, L2, or L3)

Teacher Circulating & Support:

While students work:

- Check that students understand protagonist and antagonist roles
- Encourage creative predictions (there’s no wrong answer!)

Character Planning Pages (Writing track - Optional)

If you have chosen the Writing track for your class, distribute the “Character Planning” Pages (choose L1, L2, or L3) after or alongside students completing their Activity Pages.

Say: Now it’s your turn to create a character for your own story. You can create either a protagonist or antagonist—whichever you feel most excited about. Use the class example we created together as your guide.

Display the “Character” Planning Page and review each section.

Teacher Circulation and Conferencing

Begin by supporting struggling students through guided prompts:

- Tell me about your character. What do they look like?
- What does your character want more than anything?
- Every character needs a weakness. What makes your character not perfect?

Move to on-level students midway through to check for depth and balance:

- I notice you listed many positive traits. How can we add one weakness to make your character more interesting, like Sam Baron?
- Tell me about your villain. What makes them dangerous? Remember, the worse the villain, the better the story.

Meet with advanced students to extend their thinking:

- How does this character’s motivation connect to your story’s main problem?
- What backstory might explain why your character is this way?
- How will your character change or grow by the end of the story?

✓ **Quick Check** (after 8 minutes): Have students show you on their fingers how they are progressing.

- 1 finger = Still deciding on character type
- 2 fingers = Working on name or appearance
- 3 fingers = Working on motivation
- 4 fingers = Adding strengths and weaknesses
- 5 fingers = Finished!

Scan responses to gauge pacing.

- If most show 3-5 fingers → allow them to proceed
- If most students show 1-2 fingers → give more examples and spend more time with guided practice.

Teacher Note: Allow additional time on another day if needed for students to complete their activity pages. You may choose to have students create an additional character as well if you are choosing to have students complete the writing track.

Lesson Wrap-Up


Turn and Talk: Have students share with a partner: *Characters are important to the story because* _____.

[Students share for 1 minute total]

Invite 2–3 students to share with the class.

Say: You should feel proud of your work today. You're thinking like real authors—learning about characters and why we as readers care about them.

Share with students what Alane said at the end of the video. Tell them to reflect on this and be ready to discuss next time. She said “Now on to the next big thing we have to decide on and guys this one is BIG. It's the super-secret ingredient that all great stories have. See if you can figure out this next piece before we come back for our next video.”

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** This week during independent reading, have students become character detectives. Prompt them to identify the protagonist and antagonist in their books and notice: What makes the protagonist complex and

interesting? What makes the antagonist a real threat? What strengths and flaws do both characters have? Students can record observations in their *Read like a Writer* Journal and share examples later in the week.

Exit Ticket

Collect the Activity Pages from independent work and distribute exit tickets.

Display the prompt:

Prompt: *What makes a great villain? Use evidence from the video or a book you've read to explain.*

Sample Strong Response: A great villain is really bad and ruthless. In the video, Alane made Catriona try to hurt Sam when he was a baby. This shows Catriona will do anything. The worse the villain is, the more the hero has to act, which makes a better story.

Collect exit tickets as students transition to the next activity. **END OF LESSON 3**

Part Four: The Super-Secret Ingredient

Grade: 3-5 | Duration: 55 minutes | Video Length: 5:48

Standards Alignment

CCSS: W.4.3, W.4.5, SL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.5

Lesson at a Glance

- Connect & Prepare (8 min): Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary
- Model (12 min): Watch video with strategic think-aloud pauses
- Guided Practice (15 min):
 - Discuss the super secret ingredient and formula for a story
 - *Writing track: Create a problem for the class story*
- Independent Practice (15 min):
 - “Recipe for a Great Story” Student Activity Page
 - *Writing track: “What’s the Problem?” Story Planning Page*
- Lesson Wrap-Up (5 min): Partner share, exit ticket, and reading connection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the “super secret ingredient” (problem) that makes stories exciting
2. Understand the story formula: Character + Problem + Solution = Story

Writing Track Objective (Optional):

3. Brainstorm problem ideas with consequences for their own stories

Materials Needed

- Part 4 video: "The Super Secret Ingredient" (5:48 runtime)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, digital display
- Vocabulary: Four Corner Signs prepared with words on them
- Student Activity Pages: “Recipe for a Great Story”, “Story Summary”, “Identifying Story Elements”, “What’s the Problem”, “Character + Problem + Solution” (L1, L2, or L3)
- Writing track (Optional): “What’s the Problem?” Story Planning Page (L1, L2, L3)
- Anchor chart from previous lessons

- Pencils/markers
- Sticky notes or scratch paper for exit ticket

Key Vocabulary

- **Problem:** The main challenge or conflict the character faces in a story
- **Consequences:** what happens as the result of the problem if not resolved
- **Stakes:** What’s at risk; what the character could lose if the problem isn’t solved
- **Intensity:** How strong or serious something is

Connect & Prepare

Activate Prior Knowledge & Build Curiosity

Say: We've been learning about what authors have to think about before writing. We have titles, settings, and characters. But Alane Adams says we're still missing something—something she calls "the biggest piece of all." She says it's the *super-secret ingredient* that makes stories exciting.

Tell students that before they begin watching today’s videos they are going to play a game to learn some vocabulary that Alane will be using in her videos today.

Vocabulary Instruction: Four Corners Protocol

Post signs in four corners of the room labeled:

- Corner 1: **Problem** – a big challenge the character must solve
- Corner 2: **Consequences** – what happens as the result of the problem if not resolved
- Corner 3: **Stakes** – what’s at risk; what the character could lose
- Corner 4: **Intensity** – how strong or serious something is

Corner Tour: Walk to each corner, read the word and definition aloud, and have students repeat.

Say: When I read a scenario, think about which word fits best. When I say ‘Go!’, walk to that corner and be ready to explain why.

Gameplay: Read each scenario → Give 3 seconds to think → Say “Go!” → Students move to corners → Call on 1–2 to explain their choice → Confirm the correct answer.

Scenarios:

1. A girl forgets their lines during the school play. (*Problem*)
2. If they can't remember, the whole class's performance might be ruined. (*Consequences*)
3. The entire school is counting on this performance to raise money. (*Stake*)
4. The show is tomorrow, and the student still hasn't practiced enough. (*Intensity*)
5. A soccer team is losing 0–3 at halftime. (*Problem*)
6. If they lose, they won't make the championship game. (*Consequences*)
7. This is their last chance to win before their star player moves away. (*Stake*)
8. The other team's star player keeps scoring no matter what they try. (*Intensity*)
9. A boy's little sister accidentally loses his favorite video game. (*Problem*)
10. He refuses to talk to her for days, and now both feel awful. (*Consequences*)

Model

Set Viewing Purpose

Say: Authors, as you watch today's video, Alane Adams is going to tell the same story about a character named Sam two different ways. The first version leaves out the *secret ingredient*. The second version adds it in — and suddenly the story becomes exciting!

Display focus questions on board:

- *What's different between the two versions of the story Alane shares?*
- *What makes the second version more exciting?*

Watch Video with Strategic Pauses

Start Video

Pause Point 1: Stop at 3:15 (After “Okay, I’m going to stop right there”)

Turn and Talk: What made the second version of the story more interesting? What was different?

[Students share for 1 minute total.]

Call on 2–3 students to share ideas with the class.

Model Thinking: I noticed that in the second version, Alane added some extra details. His mom is a witch, his dad is a god, and he's connected to a curse that could destroy

everything. His friends are kidnapped, and every time he loses his temper, *The Red Sun* grows worse. That makes the story exciting because now Sam has huge challenges to face — not just an ordinary day.

Explain that this difference is the “super-secret ingredient” Alane was talking about.

Resume video to the end

After Viewing: Discuss Key Concepts

Ask: What was the secret ingredient?

[Students respond: A problem.]

Say: Yes! And not just any problem—a big problem with serious consequences.

Write on board:

CHARACTER + PROBLEM + SOLUTION = STORY

Say: Alane showed us this formula. Every story needs these three parts working together. The character faces a problem and must find a solution. Today we focused on the problem which is the super-secret ingredient. Without a big problem, there’s no story.

Exploring The Red Sun

Display and read aloud the following excerpt to students:

“You’re supposed to be dead,” the dwarf said, pressing the tip of his blade to Sam’s stomach.

Sam backed away. “Well, sorry to disappoint,” Sam joked, hoping the dwarf wasn’t about to run him through.

[Later:]

“The witches killed your father, and now they’re after you,” Rego said, his eyes fixed on Sam.

“After me? Why?” Sam’s voice cracked.

“Because of who you are. Because of what you can do. The witches want to use you to bring back Catriona and her sisters. And if they succeed, all of Orkney - and your world - will fall to darkness.”


Teaching Point:

- **Sam’s Problem:** The witches are after him and want to use him for evil
- **Consequences:** If they succeed, both worlds will fall to darkness
- **Stakes:** Sam’s life, his mother’s safety, both entire worlds
- **Intensity:** The problem gets worse - his father is already dead, and now he’s being hunted

Ask and Discuss:

- Can you identify Sam’s problem in this scene?
- What are the consequences if he doesn’t solve it?
- How does knowing this problem make you want to keep reading?

Say: Authors create problems that make us care and make us desperate to find out what happens. This is what keeps us reading and keeps us turning the pages.

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** Problems are what drive stories forward. Without a problem, nothing happens and the characters won’t change or grow. During independent reading this week, have students track:

- What is the main problem in my book?
- What are the consequences if it isn’t solved?
- How does the problem get worse as the story continues?

Encourage them to record examples in their *Read Like a Writer* Journal.

Guided Practice

Say: Alane revealed the super-secret ingredient today! Let’s make sure we understand why problems are so important to stories.

Review the formula: **CHARACTER + PROBLEM + SOLUTION = STORY**

Ask: “What happens if we have a character and a setting, but no problem?”

Call on 2-3 students.

Sample responses: (Nothing happens, it’s boring, there’s no story to tell)

Say: Exactly! Remember when Alane told Sam’s story the first time without the problem? Sam just had a normal day at school. But when she added the problem—friends kidnapped, curse threatening everything—suddenly we have to know what happens next!”

Create anchor chart with student input:

Why Stories Need Problems:

- Problems create excitement
- Problems give characters something to do
- Problems make us care about what happens
- Problems drive the story forward
- Without problems, nothing would happen

Turn and Talk: Think about your favorite book. What would happen if the author took away the main problem? Would you still want to read it?"

[Students share for 1 minute]

Call on 2-3 students to share examples.

Note to Teacher: This section is for the Writing track and students who will be completing Story Planning Pages. If you are not using the Writing track, skip to Independent Practice.

Writing track (Optional)

Say: Now we'll think like an author about problems. We'll create a problem for our class story so we understand what authors do.

Discuss and review what's been developed so far: *Title, genre, setting, and main character.*

Say: Every great story needs a problem. What makes a problem big enough for a story?

Discuss student responses.

Model Thinking: I'm asking myself: What kind of problem fits our story's genre and setting? We're writing a [genre] story set in [setting]. The problem has to match that world — just like how Sam's problem in *The Red Sun* fits into the world Alane created.

Brainstorm together using the "What's the Problem?" Story Planning Page.

Examples by genre:

- *Fantasy:* The kingdom's magic is disappearing.
- *Mystery:* Someone is framing the main character for a theft.
- *Realistic fiction:* The family might have to move away from friends.

Turn and Talk: Which problem do you think would make the most exciting story? Why?

[Students share for 1 minute; then class votes.]

Adding Consequences

Say: What happens if this problem isn't solved? Watch how I list consequences.

[Write 3 consequences on board]

Say: These serious consequences raise the stakes and make readers desperate to see what happens next.

Building Intensity

Model Thinking: A story's problem shouldn't stay the same; it should *grow*. Things need to get worse and worse until the end. That's what builds excitement.

Example (Fantasy):

- *Beginning:* Small cracks appear in the shield.
- *Middle:* Shadow creatures start invading villages.
- *End:* The hero's best friend is captured — the danger becomes personal.

Say: Every time the problem grows, the reader's heart beats faster. That's intensity!

Independent Practice

Say: Today, Alane revealed that the super-secret ingredient is the problem. She showed us that problems make stories exciting and give us reasons to keep reading.

Distribute the "Recipe For a Great Story" Student Activity Page (choose L1, L2, or L3 based on student needs).

Read a short story aloud or have students think of a story they are very familiar with. Have students use what they learned from Alane to complete.

Teacher Note: You may choose from additional worksheets provided. Worksheets: "Recipe for a Great Story", "Story Summary", "Identifying Story Elements", "What's the Problem", "Character + Problem + Solution" Student Activity Page (L1, L2, or L3)

Story Planning Pages (Writing track - Optional)

If you have chosen the Writing track for your class, distribute the “What’s the Problem?” Planning Pages (choose L1, L2, or L3) after or alongside students completing their Activity Pages.

Display the “What’s the Problem?” Planning Page.

Say: Now it’s your turn to create a problem for the story you have started! You’ll:

1. Brainstorm several possible problems.
2. Choose your favorite.
3. Describe the character’s problem in detail.
4. Identify the consequences if it isn’t solved.
5. Explain how the problem will grow worse throughout the story.

Remind students that a strong problem should be big enough for a full story and have serious consequences that make readers care.

Students may work silently or quietly brainstorm with a neighbor.

Teacher Circulation & Support

- Stuck: “What’s the worst thing that could happen?”
- Too small: “Could you make this bigger or more dangerous?”
- Wrong genre: “Does this problem fit your story’s world?”

✓ **Quick Check** (after 8 minutes): Have students show you how they are progressing using their fingers and referring to the scale below.

- 1 – Still brainstorming
- 2 – Problem written
- 3 – Problem and consequences written
- 4 – Everything complete
- 5 – I’m done and willing to help others

Scan responses and make note of who needs more support. Circulate and connect with those students who showed a 1 or 2. Have students who showed a 5 help others.

Teacher Note: Allow additional time on another day if needed for students to complete their Activity Pages and Student Planning Pages.

Lesson Wrap-Up


Turn and Talk: Tell your partner one thing you discovered about how problems work in stories.

[Students share briefly.]

Invite 2–3 volunteers to share aloud.

Say: Today we learned that stories need big problems with serious consequences that grow in intensity. Without a problem, there’s no story — and no reason to keep reading!

Remind students of what Alane said, "Most stories end like this: spoiler alert—the good guy wins, the bad guy loses, and they all live happily ever after. But WHY? Why do you think authors write stories with happy endings?"

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** This week during independent reading, have students track how a problem in a story they are reading grows in intensity. Prompt them to notice: When does the author introduce the problem? How does it get worse? What consequences are at stake? How does this make you want to keep reading?

Have students add examples to their “Read Like a Writer” Journals.

Exit Ticket

Distribute sticky notes or scratch paper. Have students complete the following:

Prompt: *Why do stories need problems? Use evidence from today’s lesson to explain.*

Collect exit tickets. Review responses to assess.

End of Lesson 4

Part Five: Completing the Puzzle

Grade: 3-5 | Duration: 55 minutes | Video Length: 5:07

Standards Alignment

CCSS: W.3.3, W.4.3, W.5.3, W.3.5, W.4.5, W.5.5, SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1, RL.3.2, RL.4.2, RL.5.2

Lesson at a Glance

- Connect & Prepare (8 minutes): Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary
- Model (15 minutes): Watch video with strategic think-aloud pauses
- Guided Practice (15 min):
 - Discuss readings power and why stories matter
 - *Writing track: Co-create a solution and ending for class story*
- Independent Practice (15 min):
 - “Reading is my Superpower” and “Story Doctor” Student Activity Pages
 - *Writing track: “The Solution” and “Story Plan” Planning Pages*
- Wrap-Up (5 minutes): Celebrate completion and reading connection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain why reading is powerful and how it teaches empathy
2. Understand why most stories have happy endings
3. Reflect on what books teach us beyond just entertainment

Writing track Objective (Optional):

4. Create a satisfying solution that resolves their story’s problem

Materials Needed

- Part 5 video: “The Solution” (5:07 runtime)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or digital display
- “Vocabulary Word Map” Worksheet
- Student Activity Pages: “Story Doctor”, “Reading is My Superpower”, “Stepping Into Their Shoes”, “Problem Solved”, “Author’s Teach Us” (L1, L2, or L3)
- Writing track (Optional): “The Solution” and “Story Plan” Planning Pages (L1, L2, L3)

- Anchor chart from previous lessons
- Pencils/markers for student work
- Sticky notes or scratch paper for exit ticket

Key Vocabulary

- **Solution:** How the problem gets resolved or fixed at the end of the story
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand what someone else is feeling
- **Point of View:** Seeing the story through a character's eyes and thoughts

Connect & Prepare

Activate Prior Knowledge & Build Curiosity

Say: Authors, this is it! This is our final lesson with Alane Adams. We've learned how authors think about story ideas, genres, settings, characters, and problems. But our journey isn't quite complete.

Ask: If a character has a big problem, what does the story need at the end?

Take 2-3 responses.

Say: Today, Alane is going to answer an important question: Why do most stories end the way they do? She's also going to tell you about a special superpower that readers have—something you've been using your whole life without even knowing it. This lesson is about understanding why reading matters so much and how we can think like writers when we read.

Turn and Talk: Think about your favorite book. How did you feel at the end of that story? Share with your partner.

[Students share for 30 seconds]

Say: By the end of today, you'll understand why books are so powerful and what they teach us. You'll also complete your journey of understanding how authors think!

Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary Word Map

Vocabulary Words: **empathy, solution, point of view**

- Word (center circle): Write the vocabulary word. Have students repeat it twice.
- Definition (box): Write a student-friendly definition. Keep it simple and clear.

- Examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 examples, students add 1-2 of their own examples. *Note: Examples show what the word IS or DOES*
- Non-examples (box): Teacher provides 1-2 non-examples, students add 1-2 of their own non-examples. *Note: Non-examples show what the word IS NOT*
- Sentence (box): Teacher models one sentence using the word correctly. Then students write their own sentence. Call on 1-2 students to share sentences aloud.

Model

Set Viewing Purpose

Write on board:

- *Why do most stories have happy endings?*
- *What superpower do readers get?*
- *Why do authors write books?*

Say: As you watch today’s video with Alane Adams, think about these questions. They’ll help you understand what makes reading so special and powerful.

Watch Video with Strategic Think-Aloud Pauses

Play Video

Pause Point 1: Stop at 3:53 (after “and this is why I think reading is a superpower”)

Say: Alane explained that reading is a superpower. In real life, we can’t read minds, but in books, we can. The author lets us into the characters’ thoughts and feelings. That’s what makes reading so powerful – it helps us understand others.

Turn and Talk: Think of a book you’ve read. How did you understand what the character was feeling? How did the author help you see their point of view? Share with a partner.

[Students share for 1 minute total]

Call on 2–3 students to share with the class.

Resume Video to End

After Viewing: Discuss Key Concepts

Say: This is the heart of everything Alane wants us to understand. Let's talk about what books really do for us.

Ask: Why do most stories have happy endings where the good guy wins?

[Take 2 responses]

Say: Alane explained it perfectly – if the character doesn't solve the problem, what was the point? But there's more to it than that. When I read about Sam Baron being brave, it makes me think I can be brave too. When I see characters solve hard problems, it gives me hope too. Books lift us up. They inspire us. This is why reading matters.

Turn and Talk: Think about a book that taught you something or gave you hope. What was it? What did you learn?

Have students share with partners, then call on 3-4 students to share examples with the class.

Say: We read to get information and to be entertained, but also to show us that we can be brave, smart, kind, or whatever we need to be.

Tell students that you will not be reading the ending of *The Red Sun* because you want to keep it a surprise but explain how all books have endings that provide a solution and leave the reader feeling happy and pleased.

✓ **Quick Check:** Have students stand up if they can explain why stories need solutions.

Call on 1-2 students to share.

Scan room to see how students are progressing. If:

- Most students standing confidently → proceed.
- Many sitting → briefly revisit concepts before moving on.

Guided Practice

Why Reading Matters

Say: We've completed our journey with Alane! Let's review everything we've learned and talk about why reading is so powerful.

Discuss with students everything that they have learned over the series of videos with author Alane Adames.

Say: You now understand how authors think at every stage of creating a story and why reading is so powerful!

Write on board: **CHARACTER + PROBLEM + SOLUTION = STORY**

Say: Alane taught us this formula. But she also taught us something even more important—that reading gives us a superpower.

Ask: What superpower does reading give us?

Discuss responses.

Create anchor chart with student input:

Why Books Matter:

- Teach us empathy (understanding others)
- Show us we can be brave
- Give us hope
- Help us solve problems
- Let us experience different lives
- Make us better readers AND people

Turn and Talk: What's one way reading has helped you or taught you something important?

[Students share for 1 minute]

Call on 3-4 students to share with the whole class.

Say: You've just explained why reading matters! It's not just about entertainment—books make us better, kinder, braver people.

Note to Teacher: This next section is for Writing track students who will be completing Story Planning Pages. If you are not using the Writing track, skip to Independent Practice.

Writing tracks (Optional)

Say: Now that we understand why reading matters, it's time for us to write our happy ending and find a good solution to our problem in our class story.

Point to the anchor chart showing the story elements: *Title, Genre, Setting, Main Character, Problem* and review what you have already written for your class story.

Remind students that the solution comes near the end—after the character has struggled and grown.

Say: Let's brainstorm solutions for our class story. Think about our character's strengths and who could help them.

[Record 3-4 student ideas]

Quick vote: Which solution sounds most exciting? [Tally votes and choose winner]


Say: Watch how I add excitement and a twist to our solution.

Write on board as you think aloud:

After days of searching, [Character Name] tracks down Darkwin in the Shadow Forest. [Character Name] confronts him and discovers the truth—Darkwin didn't steal the magic; he was protecting it from the shadow creatures!

Model Thinking: I'm showing how the character uses their strengths to solve the problem. The character wins – just like Alane said, the good guy needs to win because that's what gives the readers hope.

Say: Look at what we've created together! We now have a satisfying solution and ending. Our class story planning is complete!

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** As readers, we experience empathy when we connect with characters. As writers, we create empathy by showing character thoughts and emotions. Throughout independent reading this week have students notice: *How does the author help me understand what the character is feeling? What details show emotions?* This strengthens both comprehension and narrative writing. Have them record their responses in their "Read Like a Writer" Journal.

Independent Practice

Say: Today, Alane taught us why reading is a superpower and why stories matter. She explained that books teach us empathy and give us hope.” We also learned how to look at stories and analyze what makes them great.

Distribute the “Story Doctor” and “Reading is My Superpower” Student Activity Page (choose L1, L2, or L3 based on student needs).

Read aloud the story for the “Story Doctor” activity page or have students read with a partner. Discuss the story before having students complete the activity page.

For the “Reading is my Superpower” Student Activity Page, have students reflect on why reading is powerful.

Teacher Note: Additional Worksheets are provided if you would like to use them.
Student Activity Pages: “*Story Doctor*”, “*Reading is My Superpower*”, “*Stepping Into Their Shoes*”, “*Problem Solved*”, “*Author’s Teach Us*” Student Activity Page (L1, L2, or L3)

Teacher Circulation & Support

While students work:

- Check that students understand why reading matters beyond entertainment
- Encourage personal connections to books they love

Ask guiding questions:

- “What has a book taught you?”
- “How does reading help you understand others?”
- “What’s one way Alane’s lessons changed how you think about stories?”

Story Planning Pages (Writing track - Optional)

If you have chosen the Writing track for your class, distribute the “The Solution” Planning Page (choose L1, L2, or L3) after or alongside students completing their Activity Pages..

Say: Now it’s your turn to create the solution for your own story. You’ll explain how your character solves the problem and create an ending that leaves the reader feeling satisfied.

Tell students that this is the final piece of their story and after today they will have everything they need to write a complete narrative.

Three Tips for Success:

1. *Think about your character's strengths—how can they use them to solve the problem?*
2. *Make it exciting! Show what happens—don't just say "they solved it."*
3. *Look back at our class example if you need inspiration.*

Students may work silently or talk quietly with partners.

Teacher Circulation & Conferencing

Provide targeted prompts while circulating:

- Stuck: "What strengths could your character use?"
- Too easy: "Could the first attempt fail before they succeed?"
- Wrong fit: "Does this solution match your character?"
- Missing resolution: "What happens afterward? How are things different?"

✓ **Quick Check:** Have students write one word that describes their solution on a scratch piece of paper—*exciting, clever, surprising, or brave*.

Hold it up when they are ready.

[Scan responses quickly to gauge confidence and completion.]

Teacher Note: Allow additional time on another day if needed for students to complete their Planning Page. Once complete, students should add their selected ideas from this lesson to their *Story Plan* Planning Page, continuing to build their complete story plan. Students will need their *Story Plan* Planning Page completed before they begin drafting.

Lesson Wrap-Up

Say: Authors, this is a big moment! You've completed all five lessons with Alane Adams and learned how authors think!


Write or display on board:

Our Journey

- *Lesson 1: Story Ideas and Brainstorming*
- *Lesson 2: Title, Genre, and Setting*
- *Lesson 3: Characters (Protagonist and Antagonist)*

- *Lesson 4: The Problem (The Secret Ingredient!)*
- *Lesson 5: The Solution and Why Reading Matters (Today!)*

Say: You now understand how authors think at every stage and because of this you are well on your way to becoming a better reader and writer!

 **Reading-Writing Connection:** Explain to students that now that they understand what an author goes through from a reading and writing perspective, you would like them to dive deeper into their reading and writing this week. During independent reading this week have them pay attention to:

- *How the author introduces setting and characters*
- *What the problem is and how it grows in intensity*
- *How the character solves it*
- *How the story resolves at the end*

This reflection helps students internalize story structure and strengthens both comprehension and writing. Encourage them to record their responses in their “Read Like a Writer” Journal.

Exit Ticket

Distribute sticky notes or scratch paper.

Prompt: *What is one thing you have learned over the past five videos with Author Alane Adams that you want to remember? Why is it important to you?*

Say: Look at all this amazing work! You’ve learned to think like authors so you can appreciate books as readers. You understand that books aren’t just words on a page, but they’re tools for building empathy, hope, and understanding.

END OF LESSON 5

END OF SERIES

Beyond Between the Pages: Choose Your Path

Now that students have completed all five *Between the Pages* lessons, you have two meaningful options for continuing their literacy journey:

Option 1: Deepening Reading Skills

Students can use the additional practice pages provided to explore how authors use story elements in their writing. This path focuses on developing stronger reading comprehension and fostering a deeper love for reading.

Option 2: From Planning to Writing

Students can transform their story plans into complete narratives, applying everything they've learned about story elements to craft their own original stories.

The choice is yours based on your instructional goals and students' needs. If you choose the writing track, here's guidance to support a successful transition:

Transition to Drafting

1. **Review Story Plans** – Have students revisit their planning sheets to confirm each story element is complete: title, genre, setting, characters, problem, and solution. Encourage them to add final details that will make drafting easier.
2. **Reread the Class Model** – Revisit the class story planned in previous lessons and briefly discuss how all elements fit together. This helps students visualize how their own stories will flow.
3. **Establish Purpose and Mindset** – Remind students that authors don't write perfect stories on the first try. Drafting is about turning ideas into sentences and discovering what works. Emphasize creativity and effort over perfection.
4. **Encourage Flexible Starting Points** – Allow students to begin where they feel most confident—at the beginning, during the problem, or at the solution. Some writers prefer starting with the most exciting scene and building outward.
5. **Model the Process** – If desired, demonstrate writing the first few sentences of your class story. Think aloud about translating your plan into narrative form: turning bullet points into sentences, adding description, or including dialogue.
6. **Celebrate Progress** – Frame this phase as the moment students officially become authors. Acknowledge that every great book begins as a first draft.

We hope you and your students have enjoyed this journey with author Alane Adams as you explored the craft of storytelling through *Between the Pages*.